



HOWARD COUNTY BRAC TASK FORCE

MARYLAND STATE BRAC ACTION PLAN REVIEW

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

6/10/08

Over the past four months, the Howard County BRAC Task Force has conducted a review of the Maryland State BRAC Action Plan. We undertook this review for four reasons:

- After the issuance of the State Plan in December, 2007, the BRAC Subcabinet asked the jurisdictions in its Local Government Subcommittee for comments.
- Because the State BRAC Action Plan was completed after Howard County had developed its BRAC planning objectives and supporting strategies, it was necessary for our Task Force to evaluate the alignment between the two plans.
- Reviewing the State BRAC Action Plan gave our Task Force the opportunity to fine tune the Howard County BRAC plan.
- The review provides our BRAC Task Force with a foundation for establishing accountability at the local, regional and state levels.

The Howard County BRAC Task Force applied the following approach:

- Seven functional committees of the Howard County BRAC Task Force, supported by Jean Friedberg, Raj Kudchadkar and other members of the team conducted the assessment of the State's BRAC Plan.
- Of the seven committees, five (Housing, Education, Infrastructure, Workforce Development and Transportation) reviewed their sections of the State Plan and discussed their work with their state counterparts. Two committees (Health and Human Services, Public Safety) had responsibilities for functional areas that were not addressed in the State Plan.
- The committees summarized their findings and recommendations in a series of one-page reports. These results were presented to the Howard County Executive on June 10, 2008.

The remainder of this executive summary contains committee recommendations, and the committee reports themselves are attached:

- **Workforce Development.** The State of Maryland is facing significant job growth and workforce turnover that will be compounded by, but is inseparable from, BRAC. This challenge is not completely reflected in the State BRAC Action Plan. In its next iteration, the State Plan should quantify the extent of the challenge, and describe how we will produce the skilled workforce required by an increasingly competitive world economy.
- **Transportation.** The Transportation Committee previously identified upgrades and initiatives considered crucial for accommodating growth and supporting a smoothly operating transportation system. Our review revealed that the State Plan as it now stands does not include several of the projects and initiatives Howard County deems important. The next edition of the State Plan should be revised to include these high priority projects and initiatives.

- **Public Safety.** The Maryland State BRAC Action Plan has no public safety component. As a result, we used this opportunity to identify areas where state, region, and local coordination is needed to ensure that public safety requirements are met. The most prominent findings of the Public Safety Committee were regional in nature and must be led from the state level. In its next edition, the State Plan must: (1) Deal with the direct impact of BRAC on regional emergency department capacity; (2) Leverage opportunities to collaborate, train, and exercise; (3) Address the coordination of local emergency management plans across the Fort Meade Region.
- **Infrastructure and Commercial Development.** These functions are primarily the responsibility of local government, and so the State BRAC Action Plan appropriately excludes any major new initiatives. The committee offers the following recommendations: (1) If BRAC Zones or Priority Funding Areas up-zone a parcel within a treatment plant's basin, it may be necessary to down-zone unimproved parcels within the same basin to assure treatment plant design matches demand; (2) We embrace the concept of Smart Growth Opportunities as presented in the State Plan to better protect the environment and our natural resources.
- **Housing.** Given that the responsibility for housing is local, it is understandable that the Maryland State BRAC Action Plan provides few new solutions that will address housing challenges posed by Fort Meade Growth and its effect on the housing environment in Howard County. The Committee recommends that the State update its housing growth projections to reflect all Fort Meade growth (not just BRAC growth), and that the State explore ways to provide more targeted support for the County's affordable housing program.
- **Health and Human Services (HHS).** The omission of health and human services in the Maryland State BRAC Action Plan provides opportunity for a combined planning effort. The State BRAC Subcabinet is encouraged to address the following recommendations in the next revision of its action plan: (1) Create and/or strengthen state-level collaborations to support development of comprehensive strategies to address statewide HHS capacity issues; (2) Develop workforce development plan specific to health and human services professionals; (3) Consider the use of financial incentives to address the capacity issues; (4) Develop a deeper understanding of regional workforce issues affecting HHS by examining migration patterns (commuting and relocating) of professionals between jurisdictions, and studying salary scales for same/similar positions in each jurisdiction; (5) Examine state legislation and state-level policies for their impact on delivery of health and human services.
- **Education.** The State Plan should be expanded to include targeted programs for supporting regional and local efforts to expand the workforce STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) pipeline with initiatives that excite elementary students about STEM, nurture that interest through the middle grades, and provide more opportunities for high school students to pursue STEM-related learning.



Workforce Development

Introduction

The State of Maryland is facing significant job growth and workforce turnover that will be compounded by, but is inseparable from, BRAC. This challenge is not completely reflected in the State BRAC Action Plan. In its next iteration, the State Plan should quantify the extent of the challenge, and describe how we will produce the skilled workforce required by an increasingly competitive world economy.

Findings

Following are the findings that resulted from our review. It would make sense, in the next update of the State Plan, to quantify the impacts of these trends and to develop more specific strategies to address the impacts:

- At present, 14.6% of the workforce at DISA is 55 or older, but by 2013 50% of DISA's workforce will be over 55 years of age and eligible for retirement. This is typical of the Fort Meade region's overall workforce.
- The regional workforce shortage is aggravated by the lack of an intensively trained Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) workforce. In addition, many qualified individuals in the region lack security clearances.
- Private sector small companies in Howard County face fierce competition for contracts because the federal government is using low-bid pricing instead of best-value in awarding contracts. Low-bid pricing is a hindrance in attracting and retaining high-skill level workers.
- There may be an inconsistency in the application of local and State workforce development funding approaches.
- The Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR) may be considering an inter-State commuter incentive program for non-Maryland workers coming to BRAC employment locations in MD.

A Regional BRAC Workforce Development Project Coordinator has recently been hired for the Ft. Meade Region. This position is responsible for coordinating regional workforce development efforts among Howard, Anne Arundel and Carroll Counties. Fort Meade will draw workers from inside and outside of this region.

Recommendations

The challenge of workforce development is compounded by challenges in the key related areas of childcare, transportation and affordable housing. The State should extend and expand the workforce development program outlined in the BRAC Action Plan by incorporating the following:

- Develop a comprehensive program for workforce development through 2020, given the aggregate job growth projected in the State BRAC Study and the volume and impact of workforce retirements.
- Develop and disseminate specific information about the jobs, skill sets and educational requirements for the positions that may be unstaffed as the Ft. Meade Region begins the BRAC process.
- Offer targeted assistance to small businesses by exceeding the Federal Small Business Guidelines and providing outreach assistance to match regional small businesses directly with the government and large prime contractors.
- Along with local governments, increase the State's investment in incumbent workforce training and identify the industry sectors that are priorities for these investments. Provide incentives for individuals who upgrade their STEM skills.
- Encourage developers and employers to provide onsite childcare facilities to address the challenges faced by dual-career families.
- Consider incentives for out-of-state workforce members to relocate close to work in Maryland as a means of moderating the costs of transportation.



Transportation

Introduction

The Transportation Committee previously identified a list of projects that would help address the consequences of future growth at Fort Meade. The projects are especially important because growth at Fort Meade represents a tremendous impact on the efficiency of local and regional transportation networks. As a result, the Transportation Committee set out to examine the Maryland State BRAC Action Plan to specifically see where the State expected to concentrate its efforts on transportation issues affected by BRAC.

Findings

The Transportation Committee's previously identified upgrades and initiatives are crucial for accommodating growth and supporting a smoothly operating transportation system. As the chart below reflects, the State Plan fails to take into consideration several of the projects and initiatives Howard County deems important:

HOWARD COUNTY RECOMMENDATIONS	STATE BRAC PLAN
<i>Highways</i>	<i>Highways</i>
US-1/MD-175 - Construct US 1/MD 175 Interchange	Not Included
MD-175 - Widen MD 175 between US1 and MD295	Not Included
I-95 - Widen I-95 by adding two HOV lanes	Not Included
US-1 - Expedite improvements along US1	Not Included
<i>Rail Services</i>	<i>Rail Services</i>
MARC - Improve the frequency, reliability and scope of MARC service	Included – MDOT technical study underway
Green Line - Continue evaluating options to extend the Washington Metro Green Line	Not Included - may not be necessary if MARC upgraded
<i>Bus Services</i>	<i>Bus Services</i>
TOF - Develop a joint use Transit Operations Facility (TOF) at Fort Meade	Included - expanded site alternatives analysis underway
Routes - Restructure and expand local and regional bus services, including express routes with strategically located park and ride lots to serve as focal points for express bus service	Minimally Included - relies on expanded local services with no funding identified
Incentives - Create fare incentives to improve ridership and Ft. Meade Parking disincentives	Not Included
<i>Funding</i>	<i>Funding</i>
TTF - Support proposals to expand funding to Maryland's Transportation Trust Fund	Partially Included - revenue package reduced by General Assembly
Regional Plan - Support the 2007 Baltimore Regional Transportation Plan	Included - update needed to address reduced revenue increase

Recommendations

In order to address the needs omitted in the State Plan, the following measures should be taken:

- Raise the profile of Howard County's BRAC transportation needs.
- Continue to work with appropriate State agencies to insert the US1/MD 175 interchange and MD 175 widening into the BRAC Action Plan.
- Solicit increased funding for expanded local transit connections to Fort Meade.
- Due to funding constraints and shorter project lead time required, focus on and prioritize transit solutions over highway improvements.
- Continue to support and encourage regional approaches and solutions to ensure funding for Howard County projects including but not limited to the TOF.



Public Safety

Introduction

The Public Safety Committee had no “baseline” to compare the State’s plan and Howard County’s plan to address growth at Fort Meade due to the fact that the Maryland State BRAC Action Plan had no public safety component. As a result, we pursued this opportunity to identify areas where state, region, and local coordination is needed to ensure that public safety requirements are met as the impact of BRAC reaches Howard County.

Findings

The Public Safety Committee identified the following areas of concern that must be addressed on a *regional* basis. Participation and cooperation by the State and surrounding jurisdictions will be necessary to further identify the challenges, determine possible solutions, and implement plans and action steps to address these needs.

Hospital / Emergency Department (ED) Capacity (*day-to-day and surge capacity during disaster*)

- Existing ED capacity is often limited by high occupancy in other hospital departments.
- An ED closing at one hospital produces a “ripple” effect on hospitals in the region.
- ED capacity challenges will intensify with population growth and will face further challenges in the event of a natural disaster or a man-made disaster involving a high profile “target” at Fort Meade.

Emergency Management and Public Safety Response

- Past planning at Fort Meade has primarily involved NSA and Anne Arundel County.
- There is not adequate coordination in planning, training, and exercises of emergency management for the area around Fort Meade.
- Traffic Management for evacuation routes currently does not have a regional perspective.
- Plans must include assumed evacuations from D.C. and Baltimore; compounding the complexity of evacuating Fort Meade.
- Collaboration between fire service agencies is well established as a result of the Incident Command System (ICS) and in recent years law enforcement has taken significant steps towards collaboration through the application of ICS and participation in regional exercises.

Recommendations

The next revision of the State Plan must include public safety. The most prominent findings of the Public Safety Committee were regional in nature and must be led from the state level. While Howard County can “isolate” specific issues, a broader context and attention are necessary to make appreciable progress. The State Plan must:

- ***Deal with the direct impact of BRAC on regional ED Capacity*** - The State needs to analyze regional ED surge capacity during a disaster. The criteria by which additional hospital beds and ER space are approved must be evaluated and ensure that it considers future needs, as well as historical use.
- ***Leverage opportunities to collaborate, train, and exercise*** – The State can promote opportunities to exchange information and exercise capabilities cross-functionally using existing structures.
- ***Address the coordination of local emergency management plans within the Fort Meade Region*** - In particular, there needs to be review and collaboration of traffic management among the evacuation plans of local jurisdictions. A preliminary review by the Public Safety Committee indicates that MD-175 plays a prominent role in Fort Meade and NSA evacuation plans; a planning study and expansion of MD-175 will prove vital in improving regional emergency evacuation preparedness.

The Howard County public safety sector will continue to address the issues that are within reach. With the support of the proposed recommendations for the State Plan, the Fire and Police Chiefs will continue to explore how to locally leverage relationships and resources to address the gaps previously identified. For example, actions such as the Regional Incident Management Team (IMT) exercise in March 2008 drew Howard County Police and Fire leadership into the same room as the National Security Agency.



Infrastructure & Commercial Development

Introduction

In our review of the State of Maryland BRAC Action Plan in relationship to the Howard County BRAC Task Force Infrastructure & Commercial Development report, we note the following: The State Plan is a generalized report that addresses issues mainly on a regional and state basis.

Findings

The State Plan speaks of the need for coordination in waste water management, water supply, solid waste and storm water management. The Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) coordinates these efforts state-wide and local jurisdictions typically follow MDE guidelines. Our committee report addresses local issues and a more defined synopsis of the potential gaps and shortfalls of Howard County's infrastructure and commercial development in relationship to the Howard County General Plan and as it relates to BRAC and growth at Fort Meade.

The State Plan mentions the use of "BRAC Zones," or "Priority Funding Areas," for the following purpose:

[T]o mitigate the impact of the large number of people coming to the State by directing population growth to areas that are served by public transit but have underutilized capacity in terms of housing, public facilities, and infrastructure. In keeping with the principles of Smart Growth...the State can reduce development pressure outside the Priority Funding Areas while providing an incentive for the relocation of BRAC workers to targeted areas using existing State resources.

Caution must be exercised as these "Zones" or "Areas" may result in up-zoning of the parcel. If these actions take place in service areas that have limited capacity, the net increase in demand may outstrip the waste water infrastructure's capacity. In particular the Little Patuxent Water Reclamation Plant in Howard County is running up against a nutrient cap that will not allow any more flow than projected by the current General Plan.

Recommendations

If BRAC Zones or Priority Funding Areas up-zone a parcel within this treatment plant's basin, it may be necessary to down-zone unimproved parcels within the same basin to ensure that treatment plant design matches demand, or additional measures like pumping waste water to another treatment facility must occur.

With regard to other findings in the State Plan, Howard County is well focused and positioned to meet these needs and requirements. We embrace the concept of Smart Growth Opportunities as presented in the State Plan to better protect the environment and our natural resources. When considering infrastructure and commercial development overall, Howard County has a good balance in relationship to the General Plan and future BRAC/Fort Meade Growth.



Housing

Introduction

Given that the responsibility for housing is local, it is understandable that the Maryland State BRAC Action Plan provides few new solutions that will address housing challenges posed by Fort Meade Growth and its effect on the housing environment in Howard County.

It is important to emphasize that local housing issues are addressed by local zoning, housing laws, and housing regulations. In Howard County's case, the General Plan, the zoning regulations, and the existing allocation system are not going to change for the growth identified at Fort Meade. Since these tools will manage present and projected growth effectively, the Howard County BRAC Task Force Housing Committee is not seeking to have the State Plan address this area.

Findings

While the State Plan touches on some existing programs of The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development designed to enhance homeownership and rental opportunities, these programs will not have an impact on Howard County housing in relation to Fort Meade Growth. Nonetheless, the Committee identified three concerns:

- The State Plan specifies BRAC housing demand for Howard County at 1,853 household. This amount is lower than the 2,300 - 2,800 currently projected by the Housing Committee.
- A principal challenge is affordability, and the State Plan does not offer retail mortgage products or rental finance programs for local agencies that can offer solutions for home seekers. Howard County must rely on its Moderate Income Housing Unit (MIHU) Program, for which 114 Fort Meade Growth households was previously identified.
- Due to the expected workforce turnover at the agencies relocating to our region, a younger demographic will emerge for housing demand. Howard County expects a good match between housing product and home seekers.

Recommendations

The difference in household projections between the State Plan and Howard County Housing Committee must be reconciled. Outside of this single issue, there is no specific recommendation for updating the State Plan to address Fort Meade Growth's impact on Howard County. Nonetheless, with respect to existing zoning and housing regulations, the following local actions should be considered:

- ***Timing of MIHUs*** - Take steps to ensure that sufficient MIHUs are built coincident with the lower wage job growth which is projected to take place between 2012 and 2015.
- ***Adjust Housing Type*** - Establish rental housing assistance programs or adjust MIHU units in the pipeline to match housing type with household incomes of lower wage job holders.
- ***Develop One Stop Approach*** - Align state mortgage and downpayment assistance programs with County's MIHU and other homeownership programs.
- ***Loan Fund*** - Consider creation of a revolving loan fund to buy down home purchase prices for lower income households.
- ***Monitor Results*** - Monitor the actual income and geographic distribution of Fort Meade Growth households throughout the region to verify current assumptions.



Health & Human Services

Introduction

In its 2007 analysis of the potential impact of growth at Fort Meade, the Health & Human Services Committee identified a number of capacity issues facing Howard County services. These issues are not limited to Howard County, however. They are regional, State – and in some instances, even national – issues. The future well-being of the health and human services sector, and its capacity to meet the needs of families relocating to Maryland due to BRAC, calls for analysis and action at the state level.

The omission of health and human services in the Maryland State BRAC Action Plan creates a serious gap in that planning effort. The State BRAC Subcabinet is encouraged to include the following findings and recommendations in its Action Plan.

Findings

- Many health and human services throughout the State are already at, or beyond, capacity.
 - ***Health/Mental Health***
 - § Shortage of doctors, dentists, nurses and other medical/mental health professionals
 - § Current hospital emergency room and inpatient bed capacity may be based on inadequate population projections
 - ***Child Care***
 - § Declining number of family providers
 - § Shortage of infant and school-age slots
 - ***Senior care***
 - § Waiting lists for Medicaid waiver and senior care programs
- Additional BRAC growth will further impact ability to maintain health and safety standards for care.
 - ***Ratio of health care providers/patients***
 - ***Square footage for child care facilities***
- These issues involve multiple functional areas, such as education, housing and transportation; not just health and human services. For example, the limited number of child care providers is an issue that should be addressed in conjunction with workforce development agencies.

Recommendations

In order to adequately address regional health and human services, especially with the projected impact of growth at Fort Meade, the State Plan should include four actions:

- Create and/or strengthen state-level collaborations to support development of comprehensive strategies to address capacity issues.
- Develop a workforce development plan specific to health and human services professionals, including training, recruitment, and retention. Consider use of incentives, such as signing bonuses or college loan forgiveness.
- Develop a deeper understanding of regional workforce issues by examining migration patterns (commuting and relocating) of professionals between jurisdictions, and studying salary scales for same/similar positions in each jurisdiction.
- Examine state legislation and state-level policies for their impact on delivery of health and human services. For example, could hospitals seeking to expand bed capacity (due to BRAC population growth) through the Certificate of Need process receive expedited approval?



Education

Introduction

While the State BRAC Action Plan covers pertinent issues dealing with education and Fort Meade Growth, the State Plan must take the next step to develop concrete strategies that local jurisdictions can implement.

The issue of most importance to the Education Committee is STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) initiatives. Howard County is a microcosm of the US, with its increasing economic reliance on industries in STEM fields and its urgent need of qualified employees. It is central to the success of Maryland's high-tech corridor, where interstate highways link thousands of businesses, government agencies, and world-class universities in which research and innovation thrive.

Well-educated residents have easy access to jobs in the growing fields of biotechnology, aerospace, defense, national security, and other sectors. Nevertheless, the regional demand for workers with advanced skills in critical areas is outpacing the supply available. Between 1970 and 2000, the US dropped from 3rd place to 16th among 17 developed nations in the proportion of students receiving degrees in science and engineering. More future workers must be groomed for the STEM-related positions that are so critical to regional—and national—economic growth.

Findings

The BRAC Plan sets out to have the Maryland State Department of Education provide the leadership framework necessary for successful STEM initiatives. The next logical step in the process must be the identification and development of strategies for executing regional STEM actions.

BRAC and regional employer demand for a skilled STEM workforce is exceeding the supply of STEM-ready graduates from the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS), and the problem is expected to worsen over the next five years. STEM-related jobs are not just for the college-bound. They include well-paying jobs for engineering technicians, biotechnology technologists, and other support personnel. Projected demand in STEM occupations in the following four contiguous Workforce Investment Areas offers a snapshot of the challenge:

Occupational Clusters	Howard/Carroll	Anne Arundel	Montgomery	Prince George's	Total Openings
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	4,295	4,540	11,565	6,775	27,175
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	1,490	2,585	3,605	2,255	9,935
Life, Physical and Social Science Occupations	970	1,150	5,995	2,220	10,335
Healthcare Practitioner and Technical Occupations	4,380	3,785	10,640	4,595	23,400
TOTALS	11,135	12,060	31,805	15,845	70,845

Source: Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation, Occupational Projections 2004-2014

Recommendations

The State Plan should include targeted programs for supporting regional and local efforts to expand the workforce pipeline through initiatives that excite elementary students about STEM, nurture that interest through the middle grades, and provide more opportunities for high school students to pursue STEM-related learning. Specifically, the approach we recommend would further achieve the following:

- Increase the number of HCPSS students pursuing high quality STEM enrichment experiences, academics, and career programs.
- Expand talent-development practices, particularly at the elementary level.
- Strengthen the content knowledge and confidence of all teachers of STEM, especially grades K-5.
- Increase the impact of community stakeholders through strategic, sustainable partnerships.
- Continue the development of a strong Student Services plan to transition new families to HCPSS.